

2001

Compound of Majesty: Prince Hal and Hamlet

Dustin Lovell
University of Redlands

Follow this and additional works at: https://inspire.redlands.edu/cas_honors

 Part of the [Dramatic Literature, Criticism and Theory Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lovell, D. (2001). *Compound of Majesty: Prince Hal and Hamlet* (Undergraduate honors thesis, University of Redlands). Retrieved from https://inspire.redlands.edu/cas_honors/76



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#)

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Honors Projects at InSPIRe @ Redlands. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of InSPIRe @ Redlands. For more information, please contact inspire@redlands.edu.

Dustin Lovell

Senior Honors Thesis

English Literature

“...Compound of Majesty...”*

[Introduction]

On the relation between new poetry and old poetry, T.S. Eliot says that “what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it...the *whole* existing order must be...altered...The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past” (761-2). Eliot’s argument that new literature involves old literature in its invention implies that the past is invested in the formation of the new, rather than the new merely being a conforming or diverging product of the old. Literature enriches the understanding of former literature, just as older literature gives the new a foundational framework with which to be expressed.

Although Shakespeare’s *Henry IV Part 1* (1598) and *Part 2* (1600) and *Hamlet* (1601~1603) are by the same playwright and of the same time period, this two-way relationship can be seen between the historical plot running through the former plays and the tragic plot of the latter. Prince Hal and Hamlet’s comparable progression to maturation exemplify the ability of a plot to appear in different settings and genres. However, although the plays have many similarities in their plots and character developments, their differing genres and the comparisons and contrasts between the language of both reveal the diversity which may be achieved from the same basic story line. Because of this relationship between the plays, they may not only be read chronologically in order to understand how *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2* affect *Hamlet* in preceding it; the plays may be read interactively, giving an understanding how Hal changes in

history plays followed by another which diverts their plot into the tragic genre, these plays become a conversation over the prince-plot, which is spoken in the ways they differ from and agree with each other. One alternately critiques the other, offering various readings from the perspectives offered in the plot development and resolution of the differing genres, the fulfillment of both Hamlet and Hal's characters as the plots' protagonists, and the similar or individual language of the plays. This relation between the plays celebrates the similarities and differences allows for the chronologically-backward reading of *Henry IV* through *Hamlet*. Eliot's theory, as well as the shared prince-plot, implies that neither *Hamlet* nor *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2* may be fully understood without reading the other. The weight of Hal's ascension cannot be grasped without considering Hamlet's death.

[The Prince-Plot]

With the histories, Shakespeare forms a series of plots out of England's history; with these plots he makes one greater plot depicting the War of the Roses, which reaches from *Richard II* (1597) to *Richard III* (1597). Prince Hal's ascent to kingship--only a section of the overarching plot of the histories-- reaches across *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2*. Yet, the history of England is not, itself, the center of the plays. It is a conduit through which one may view a prince's growing up from an adolescent to a responsible man, thereby fulfilling his father's expectations for him. The prince-plot is given definition and distinctiveness by being placed in the particular setting of England. This is how the prince-plot can be seen in Hal's plays to supersede the country or time of the setting, as well as the historical identities of the characters. Rather than being the rubric which Shakespeare changes to write *Hamlet*, these elements are what Shakespeare uses to structure the growth of the prince into a man capable of securing health

father, Hal must cease his offence. The closer he comes to the throne, the more responsible he must appear, for the sake of his integrity as king and to be supported by the court and public surrounding him. Because of this change between the plays, the relationships between the characters alter in tone as they move from *Part 1* to *Part 2*. An examination of the two plays as individual and sequential pieces of Hal's progression provides a greater understanding of the different circumstances under which he uses his offense for advantage in the chaotic political state created by Henry IV, which requires prince to, somehow, maneuver himself to a secure kingship in a different way than his father has done.

Shakespeare reuses the prince-plot in *Hamlet*. *Hamlet*'s story reiterates the growth of a prince by placing it in a different country and time and by portraying it through a different theatrical genre. As tragedy, where the main character's fulfillment involves his death before the play's end, *Hamlet*'s story does not continue across several plays, as does the story leading from *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2*. The progression Hal experiences across two plays must be accomplished by Hamlet in one. Yet, *Henry IV Part 1* and *Part 2* are characterized by the same form of plot as *Hamlet*, involving the passing of a prince from being juvenile to being capable of having responsibility for his country. Despite the difference in genre, *Hamlet* connects on many levels with the *Henry IV* plays. As Hal brings England to temporary health by returning legitimacy to the throne, Hamlet restores Denmark to health by removing the usurping Claudius from ruling. Yet, whereas Hal's prince role is fulfilled in his being crowned, Hamlet's must end in his death because by deposing Claudius, he will be continuing the man's regicide and usurpation. The extreme difference between the conclusions of each prince's character exemplifies the diversity which is possible in the prince-plot.

As Hal's progression is divided by the battle of Shrewsbury where he kills Hotspur and

England to a garden full of pests continues through the history cycle. This metaphor--speaking of enemies as if they were weeds or caterpillars in a garden-- runs through the histories and reappears in *Hamlet*. After *Hamlet*, it appears again only once, in *Macbeth* (1605), when the Scots attack Macbeth "To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds" ([5.2.30]). The metaphors link the English history plays through thematic motif, providing a consistent method with which Shakespeare presents his characters, many of whom span the length of the history plays in person or family. The use of a garden to describe England begins in *Richard II*, when Bolingbroke sets his intent against "The caterpillars of the commonwealth, | Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away" ([2.3.166-7]). Instances of the metaphor occur when the lecherous Duke of Suffolk says to the young Queen Margaret "So, one by one, we'll weed them all at last, | And you yourself shall steer the happy helm" (2*HVI* [1.3.97]); when she later says to her husband, King Henry VI "Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted; | Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden, | And choke the herbs for want of husbandry" (2*HVI* [3.1.29-31]); and when Richard of Gloster says two plays later to Queen Elizabeth, in front of Margaret "Ere you were queen, ay, or your husband king, | I was a pack-horse in his great affairs; | A weeder-out of his proud adversaries" (3*III* [1.3.123]). The metaphors often involve the need for a savior who is able to "weed" the realm back to health and can yet avoid being cut down, himself, as a weed or caterpillar by someone else. Filling this need is the central conflict of the prince-plot. In the histories, Hal is the nearest exemplar of this savior needed by the realm because he knows his need for freedom from indictment to have a legitimate right to the throne. Contained in the garden theme is the relation between royalty and the earth, speaking as if England were a garden and its political rulers linked and invested in the health of their country, and visa-versa.

III [1.3.123], [2.4.12], [3.1.103]. Some of these are expanded below.

is much more prevalently addressed, illustrating the body politic. “The King has two Capacities,” records Ernst H. Kantorowicz, “for he has two Bodies, the one whereof is a Body natural, consisting of natural Members as every other Man has...the other is a Body politic, and the Members thereof are his Subjects” (Kantorowicz 13).² This philosophy involves interpreting the health of a kingdom by examining both the physical and emotional health of the king, as a microcosm of the kingdom. The idea occurs in the New Testament, where Christ’s followers, the members of His kingdom, are spoken of as being his body, over which he is the head (Eph 1.22-3; Col 1.24) and is a recurring idea in classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature, as asserted by Kantorowicz. The first allusion in the play to the king’s health relating to the state of Denmark occurs indirectly in the first three lines:

Bernardo.
Who’s there?
Francisco.
Nay, answer me: stand and unfold yourself.
Bernardo.
Long live the king!

[*Hamlet* 1.1.1-3].

Under the country’s defensive conditions revealed later in the scene, the soldiers’ anticipation of attack leads them to fear. Rather than saying his name, Bernardo says a phrase, “Long live the king,” which carries special meaning presumably known only to the Danes of the play. As King Hamlet is dead, there is an irony understood by both the men, which is used as an identifying password. By the play’s opening lines, the king’s death has inundated the realm with confusion. This is reiterated later in the scene when Horatio says the ghost’s appearance “bodes some strange eruption to our state” ([1.1.69]). Having just seen the ghost, who has taken the form of

² For more work on the philosophy, read Kantorowicz, referenced below. Especially relevant is his explication of *Richard II* as Shakespeare’s study on the Body politic. In this chapter he says that “It is [Shakespeare] who has eternalized that metaphor. He has made it not only the symbol, but indeed the very substance and essence of...*The Tragedy of King Richard II* [which] is the tragedy of the King’s Two Bodies” (26).

The body politic exemplifies that, especially in such a royal-family-centered play as *Hamlet*, everything in the king's personal life is the business of the kingdom and affects the realm in some way. Throughout *Hamlet* it is used many times to describe the realm, nearly always relating it to the insecurity of Claudius' rule: the king's ghost laments "so the whole ear of Denmark | Is by a forged process of my death | Rankly abused" ([1.5.36-8]); Hamlet protests that telling of his knowledge of his father's death would "cleave the general ear with horrid speech" ([2.2.572]); Rosencrantz, displaying knowledge of the philosophy, though unknowingly coming close to late king's death being the source of Denmark's confusion, says "The cease of majesty | Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw | What's near it with it...Ne'er alone | Did the king sigh, but with a general groan" ([3.3.15-7]); Hamlet speaks to his mother of the regicide's effect on either himself or the very soil of Denmark when he says "Yea, this solidity and compound mass...Is thought-sick at the act" ([3.4.49-51]); Claudius speaks of Hamlet's relationship with the people,³ saying "He's loved of the distracted multitude, | Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes" ([4.3.4-5]). Especially poignant in the play is the player's answer to Hamlet's request for a few specific lines describing the fall of Troy: "But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword | Th'unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium, | Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top | Stoops to his base" ([2.2.482]). Hamlet's request of the passage reveals his awareness of the body politic as a way to understand his kingdom. In the passage the city itself crumbles as King Priam dies, as if to either die or to bow in reverence or pain. Such a physical connection made by Hamlet, through the player, exemplifies the relation between the king and his kingdom being on both spiritual and physical terms at once. The body politic says the king necessarily has both a physical and political body and person-- from whence, it would

³ Claudius' words of the political danger of Hamlet's relationship with the common people much resemble those about Henry Bolingbroke, spoken by Richard II, who has "Observed his courtship to the common people...As were

knew of his nephew's attempting to avenge King Hamlet, he would sentence Hamlet to English execution sooner than he does. As with Hal's display of moral ineptitude to hide his political aspirations, Hamlet exhibits his madness to distract others from his examination of Claudius. This dynamic is touched upon by Guildenstern, who says "with a crafty madness, he keeps aloof, | When we should bring him on to some confession | Of his true state" ([3.1.8]). Similarly to Rosencrantz nearly grasping the relation between Denmark's confusion and King Hamlet's death, described below, Guildenstern shows an understanding which is not heeded because it is not expected. Ironically, the mundane opinion Claudius maintains of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in spite of their moments of wisdom, is what Hamlet accomplishes in his performed madness. Claudius, latter in the scene, echoes Guildenstern by saying that "what he spake, though it lackt form a little, | Was not like madness" ([3.1.166-7]). Hamlet confirms this to Gertrude when they are alone: "it is not madness | That I have utter'd...I essentially am not in madness, | But mad in craft" ([3.4.142-89]). Hamlet's madness allows him to prepare for exposing Claudius while fooling the man's scrutiny, which is both direct and vicarious through Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Like Prince Hal and his irresponsibility, Hamlet uses his antic disposition as both a tool to satisfy and escape from the pressures of avenging his dead king and father, thereby fulfilling the expectations placed on him as prince and son. It can be asked of Hal whether being irresponsible in a responsible way is, if it achieves its goal, irresponsible; the same may be asked of Hamlet and his madness. Is purposefully being bad in order to be good, indeed, being good? Whereas Hal's irresponsibility is often genuine, especially during *Richard II*, Hamlet's performance of madness is so adept that its being feigned or not is often indistinguishable. However, according to the way he speaks to his mother, above, he considers it all a performance. Hamlet is, thus, finding truth through faking and lying to every other

beats of the line in his emotion. He speaks as if his mother and fortune as if they have the same instability, and his sudden distrust of his mother affects how he understands and interacts with the idea of fortune. His distrust of chance, however, changes during his climactic sojourn; once returned, he says “there’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow” ([5.2.218-9]). Whereas before going to England Hamlet is tenuous in his task, and, therefore, hides in his madness, once he returns he maintains his readiness with conviction that the first opportunity to kill Claudius will be providentially given and the death mandated.

In *Hamlet*, Laertes is the model against which Hamlet is set by other members of the court. Yet, Hamlet exceeds him in his amount of foresight, which is seen in the prince’s not behaving as Laertes does, directly attacking Claudius. That his wisdom is suspect can be seen in his words: “vows, to the blackest devil! | Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit! | I dare damnation...Let come what comes” (*Hamlet* [4.5.130-4]). By speaking thus in his rage, Laertes denies his vows of allegiance to Denmark’s king. Yet, stated in his own words, he is defying whichever consequences there might be for his passion. He leaves no question about his love for the dead Polonius. Laertes’ main concern is proving he is a “good son,” but in his unquestioning obedience to his idea of the expectation on him he opens himself to be manipulated by Claudius. Laertes’ rage against his father’s murderer (ironically, the same initiative prompting Hamlet against Claudius) stops him from thinking of himself and his relation to the court, which he cannot know for being absent to Paris. As the only member of the court who did not see the play-scene, Laertes believes Claudius when he says “he which hath your noble father slain | Pursued my life” ([4.7.4-5]). Laertes does not consider how he is being used by Claudius, who gives his anger a greater ethical basis in that killing Polonius’ murderer would defend the life of the new king. Ironically, though he himself is not scrutinizing his situation or that of the realm,

Henry cannot enjoy his kingship because it is unrightfully gained. Rather than Claudius' being the first character whose words resemble Henry IV's, as might be expected of another usurper, Hamlet's speech aligns first with the English king's:

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!...
Fie on't! O, fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely...

Hamlet [1.2.129-37].

That Hamlet's first soliloquy aligns with Henry IV further connects *Hamlet* to the histories, yet in a way which associates usurpation with Hamlet before Claudius. This is the first implication that Hamlet's being the prince of Denmark will implicate him as a usurper. Yet, as Henry Bolingbroke and Hamlet are the protagonists, the audience's support for Henry, as the exposé of Richard II's careless luxury, is directed toward Hamlet. The shared vocabulary of "melt, rank, solid" shows the similar states of their respective realms. Speaking of England as a body, Henry IV incites the "body politic" conception of a king's relation to his country. However, Hamlet's first words about a corporeal body are ambiguous because nothing is given to show whether "this...flesh" denotes a person's physical body or is a metaphor for Denmark. If his words are solely about Denmark, they develop and physicalize Henry IV's use of "body" to "flesh." Yet, as the malignance in Denmark has spread from the confusion in Hamlet's own family, and because his mind is revealed to the audience much more openly than is Henry IV's, it follows that he would speak of a single person's body, before expanding his speech to include the whole country, beginning with the personal before expanding to the general. Yet, in spite of Henry's actions being out of ambition, Hamlet merely acknowledges the relation between the Denmark's corruption and the royal family, implying no obligation he feels to right the realm so early in the play. His responsibility to "weed" Denmark begins when he learns that he must remove

Claudius' apparent experience in the progression of regicide. Hamlet's contemplation of "To be, or not to be," weakening to the character if only read as suicidal escapism, fits Hamlet's coming to terms with regicide if he is considering Claudius throughout the speech. When Hamlet considers "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer | The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, | Or to take arms against a sea of troubles" ([3.1.57-9]), his character is consistent with his conflict throughout the play (whether he may rightly kill a king) if "take arms" indicates to kill Claudius, rather than himself. This line's relation to Claudius is shown when the man echoes it, saying "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, | But in battalions!" ([4.5.77-8]), referencing armies on either land or sea. Shortly after Claudius says this line, Laertes enters to assault him, accompanied by a Gentleman's words of him that "The ocean, overpeering of his list, | Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste" ([4.5.95-6]), further connecting Claudius' experience through the play to Hamlet's words. Later in Hamlet's speech, he lists some burdens of life he may not have yet experienced, such as the "pangs of despised love, the law's delay, | The insolence of office" ([3.1.72-3]). Hamlet possesses Ophelia's love, which is shown latter in the scene to be a reciprocation to his own. As prince and at Denmark's head with his father, it is unlikely he would experience delay in the law, though his sympathy for his people may have told him of it by conjecture. Finally, having been at Wittenberg, and not yet very old, he may not have experienced the last burden. Yet, Claudius has experienced them, as the king and as Gertrude's husband. That Claudius has known despised love is shown in the next scene, when, in the silent play, the queen "seems loth and unwilling awhile" ([3.2.54]). If he has had to wait for his kingship, finally deposing his brother to achieve it, he knows the delay of law. As king, Claudius experiences the insolence of dealing with the responsibility of keeping Denmark safe from Hamlet's madness, though he himself is, also, merely performing his care for the realm's

what makes *Hamlet* a tragedy: the protagonist will so resemble the antagonist in killing him that he also must die to reach peace at the end. Through the play there are more allusions to Hamlet being like a son to Claudius than to King Hamlet. Hamlet is introduced by Claudius at the play's opening as "my cousin Hamlet, and my son" ([1.2.64]). By wedding Gertrude and becoming king, Claudius stands as Hamlet's predecessor as both his father-in-law and as the queen's husband. Yet, Claudius undermines the former relationship when he speaks to Gertrude of "The head and source of all your son's distemper" ([2.2.54]), shifting responsibility for Hamlet onto Gertrude. There are moments when King Hamlet and Claudius are interchangeable as Hamlet's father, such as when, to Gertrude's words "Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended" Hamlet replies "Mother, you have my father much offended" ([3.4.10-11]). She, speaking of Claudius, is reminded that Hamlet's true father is King Hamlet. A few lines later, Hamlet says "You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife; | And--would it were not so!--you are my mother" ([3.4.16-17]). Hamlet knows that through her he is related to both King Hamlet and Claudius. His words are reiterated when he says "This was your husband.--Look now what follows: | Here is your husband" ([3.4.64-65]). When questioned about Polonius' dead body, Hamlet quips "The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body" ([4.2.27-28]). Polonius is dead and with King Hamlet, but Claudius is not with either. Hamlet's words could also indicate that Claudius is "not with the body" of Denmark. This is the most enigmatic instance where the language confuses the relationships between Hamlet and the two kings. Hamlet, as prince, must replace King Hamlet, who is dead at the play's beginning. Yet, at the end of Act 1, Hamlet is given the task to kill Claudius, thereby replacing him as a usurper, and thereby making it just as necessary for him to be killed. Part of the tragedy of *Hamlet* is that if Hamlet replaces either his father or uncle as the realm's head, as Hal does Henry IV, he must die. Hamlet is linked to Claudius, who

indirect route to killing Claudius resembles Claudius, young Fortinbras' attack on Denmark, which has been approaching since its mention in the opening scene, resembles King Hamlet's upon Norway.

As soon as Hamlet dies in the plays end, Fortinbras enters, thereby assuming the head of the realm which has now been healed by Hamlet. Hamlet laments "what a wounded name, | Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!" ([5.2.343-4]). Because he could not expose Claudius to the realm as a usurper while killing him, Hamlet appears, himself, a usurper, tragically fulfilling the fear he has had throughout the play. According to the public, his actions will appear as treason, rather than balm for Denmark. Yet, to counteract this, Hamlet says "But I do prophesy th'election lights | On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice" ([5.2.343-55]). Hamlet identifies Fortinbras as the redeemer of the play's end, as both the healthy monarch to lead Denmark and the one to redress the prince's wounded name. Fortinbras says "with sorrow I embrace my fortune: | I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, | Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me" ([5.2.387-9]), referring to the past lands won from his own predecessor by King Hamlet on the day Prince Hamlet was born, as revealed in the previous scene by the gravedigger ([5.1.149-53]). The land has been in Denmark's possession as long as Prince Hamlet has been alive; rather than being without a ruler, it passes now to the expectant Fortinbras, who will, presumably, return it to the health it experienced under King Hamlet. Fortinbras' redemption of Hamlet's character happens when he orders

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had ha been put on,
To have proved most royally...

[5.2.394-5].

Speaking of the throne as a stage, Fortinbras redeems Hamlet's reputation from being that of an

thinks because, like Horatio, the audience knows of his efforts, indeed, more than does Horatio. Hamlet succeeds in exposing Claudius with Horatio's (and the audience's) help. The success of Hamlet's character relies upon the audience's perspective of him, which is provided by Shakespeare.

[*Hamlet to Henry IV Part 1*]

Hamlet fulfills the need for a tragic hero to die so order can be reached at the play's end. In *Hamlet*, order is having King Hamlet, or someone like him, as king once again. As Hamlet is not such a candidate, he must die, rather than take Claudius' place through deposition. That he must die before Fortinbras arrives is shown in how Fortinbras reacts to Hamlet: his attestation of the prince's royal worth suggests that he might have, were Hamlet still alive, placed him on Denmark's throne, though still under Norway's rule. Again, this would not heal the realm. As he is killed by Laertes, who also resembles King Hamlet in his directness, Hamlet dies the way the Ghost wanted Claudius to die--at the hand of a son who directly avenges his father. Yet, Laertes' use of poison and his employment by Claudius require his death as well because, in spite of his apparent directness, Laertes is also underhanded. Though he is not connected to the royal family, Laertes' death exemplifies that Denmark's healing requires that all underhanded people of the nobility must be removed, not merely those involved in King Hamlet's death. Laertes' dying on his own sword, which is "Unbated and envenom'd" ([5.2.316]) to kill Hamlet, is a final microcosmic figuration in *Hamlet* for Hamlet's dying in his attempt to kill Claudius. Yet, just as Laertes is forgiven in *Hamlet*'s final scene, Hamlet is forgiven and redeemed.

Reading Prince Hal through Hamlet's "ascension" to the throne highlights many aspects of Hal's plays which are changed or developed in *Hamlet*. The confused political state of being ruled by a usurper, the prince using a distracting performance to subvert the confusion, the

That would divorce this terror from my heart,'--
Meaning the king at Pomfret.

Richard II [5.4.8-10].

In spite of Exton's correct interpretation of Bolinbroke's look, Bolingbroke denies the man's regicide. In the play's final scene, when the new King Henry IV privileges many of his allies who bring news of opponents they have killed, Henry denies thanks to one man: "Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast wrought | A deed of slander...though I did wish him dead, | I hate the murderer, love him murdered" ([5.6.34-40]). Placing the blame on Exton, Henry IV exemplifies the manipulative and underhanded way he has ascended the throne.

The effect of Henry IV's manipulation becomes the political backdrop of the *Henry IV* plays. David Kastan points out that, "in successfully deposing Richard, Henry exposes the insubstantiality of the traditional assertions of sacred majesty, and he now has no meaningful access to the powerful rhetoric of legitimacy that had surrounded the throne" (25-27). By directly aiming for the throne, King Henry undermines his own legitimate claim to the throne.⁴ In order to bypass the responsibility of Richard's death and the effects of the war, King Henry closes *Richard II* with his intent to "make a voyage to the Holy Land, | To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (*RII* [5.4.49-50]). In the opening lines of *Henry IV Part 1*, his intent remains the same, but his motive has progressed to unifying the country into one endeavor "in mutual well-beseeming ranks" (*1HIV* [1.1.14]). In both instances, King Henry's reason for embarking on another Crusade is to divert responsibility for the country's broken foundation away from himself. He also wishes to secure his legitimacy and do penance for how he has achieved it by emulating King Richard I, "that robb'd the lion of his heart, | And fought the holy wars in Palestine" (*King John* [2.1.3-4]). Ironically, however, Henry is hindered by "tidings of this broil"

⁴ This is similar to how Laertes' directness in *Hamlet* makes him vulnerable to Claudius' manipulation. Hotspur's intent to assail Henry IV for Mortimer's sake in *Part 1* has a similarly debilitating effect, shown below.

Prince Hal's offence runs from the end of *Richard II* to the climax of *Henry IV Part I*, at the battle of Shrewsbury, and the reputation of it among the court persists until the climax of *Henry IV Part 2*, at his coronation. Because he spends his time in the London taverns with Falstaff rather than in court with his father, King Henry IV, the Prince garners a not untrue reputation of immaturity. His father first speaks of him in *Richard II*: "Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son? | 'Tis full three months since I did see him last" ([5.3.1]), revealing his belief that Hal is unthrifty with time and money in London when he should be accompanying his father. As heir to his father's newly-established kingship, Hal's perceived irresponsibility becomes a blot on Henry IV and his new kingdom, not merely upon himself. Henry's political aspiration inhibits his son's behaving as a son, who is given time to behave as an adolescent; the requirement to grow up in order to stay alive is placed on him without his say or will. Prince Hal ends his first soliloquy by disclosing his awareness of himself, intending to "[redeem] time, when men think least I will" (*Henry IV Part 1* [1.2.221]). The opening soliloquy "contains Shakespeare's design for the development of the character of Prince Hal" (Sjolberg 13-14). The result of Hal's unconventional use of offensiveness to maintain his security will be so unexpected that it will change his father's opinion of his time spent being an adolescent. Amidst his time having fun, Hal keeps sight of the English realm and behaves as a prince and a good son to the realm "ought," as defined by other characters' reactions to him. In *Henry V*, once Hal's place on the throne is established, members of court understand that "the prince obscured his contemplation | Under the veil of wildness" ([1.1.62-3]). Rather than offensiveness, the court (and his father) wants and expects study from him. Elsa Sjolberg shows his wisdom, in spite of his apparent lack of study by indicating Hal's anticipation of "Being wanted" ([1.2.204]), citing the many times Hal arrives onstage "at the height of crisis" (Sjolberg 13). These are when King Henry has no

his father's tactic from familiarity to camaraderie with the populace, comporting himself as a commoner to accrue popular support and courtly distaste (which breeds ignorance in his opposition). In this connection to the common people, Prince Hal's foresight can be seen to extend before his father gained the throne, when Bolingbroke's words of him in *Richard II* are read in light of the prince's plan revealed in *Henry IV Part 1*. If this is the case, Shakespeare refrains from introducing Hal in the former play because the character is preparing for his responsibility as king. Yet, it is more likely that Hal's apparent irresponsibility is genuine this early in his father's ascent, especially since, being away from his father for "full three months," Hal presumably does not know of his father's usurpation, having not accompanied him in his banishment. Regardless of whether this amount of foresight is at work in *Richard II*, Prince Hal possesses more shrewdness than his father in that, using his past and present wildness, he removes the obstacles to his future kingship before even revealing his ambition for the crown. "The fact that he is the heir of Henry IV will not make his throne secure. His personal qualifications must excel those of both King Richard and King Henry, peace must be restored, and the hearts of the people won, or the kingdom will not really be his" (Sjoberg 16). By being aware of himself in a way his father and Richard II were not, Hal retains agency in choosing the circumstances under which he ascends the throne; his offences lend him a way to avoid danger while he examines the best path of action toward his kingship. In this way, the fun Hal has with Falstaff, in drinking, thieving, and constant joking, has the underlying edge of Hal's intent to rule well. The connection between the two is shown in *Part 2*, where the crown scene is juxtaposed next to the denial of Falstaff. Whereas the crown scene between Hal and his father is private, his denial of Falstaff is public. Just as Hal cannot follow his father's example as king, he cannot lean completely on Falstaff.

temperament. When preparing to meet the King against Hotspur, Prince Hal doffs his irresponsible disposition and asserts before Falstaff “The land is burning; Percy stands on high; | And either we or they must lower lie,” to which the knight replies “Rare words! Brave world!” (*IHIV* [3.3.200-204]). Appropriately, Hal reveals his capacity for behaving as ambitiously as a prince should at the end of the tenth scene of a nineteen-scene play-- near the exact centre. Hal’s change in tone, signified by the sudden shift to iambic pentameter, signals his assuming the responsibility of his title. Hal’s change shocks Falstaff enough to produce similar verse in him, out of respect for the now-assertive Prince of Wales; the lines are the first iambic pentameter Falstaff speaks in the play. Such a change in him stresses the difference between his perception of Hal in his wild hours and the underlying reality, a dichotomy achieved by the prince’s adept timing in revealing himself.

[*Henry IV Part 1: Hotspur*]

In *Henry IV Part 1*, Hotspur rivals Hal for King Henry’s respect, as well as for the safety of the realm by supporting Edmund Mortimer’s claim to the throne. The king reveals his affection of Hotspur over his Hal, in the first scene of *Part 1*:

O, that it could be proved
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where thy lay,
And call’d mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry and he mine.
IHIV [1.1.86-90].

Ironically, in *Richard II*, King Henry IV learns of Hal’s actions from Harry Percy, who speaks his low opinion of Prince Hal’s wildness, saying

he would unto the stews,
And from the common’s creature pluck a glove,
And wear it as a favour; and with that
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.
Richard II [5.3.16-19].

tension; by behaving offensively before their eyes he is accomplishing the very ascent they would he prepare himself for.

Early in *Henry IV Part I*, Hotspur unintentionally shows how his devotion to chivalry (honorable action which visibly aligns with expectations) causes him to make unwise political choices. When Worcester mentions the man's prisoners (as if about to suggest releasing them), Hotspur interrupts him with "I'll keep them all...I'll keep them, by this hand" (*IHIV* [1.3.212-5]). Although his uncle was a member of Richard II's court (*Richard II* [2.2.59]) and has more political wisdom than Hotspur, the young Percy will not brook his even finishing the line, interrupting him on the fourth iambic foot. Hotspur publishes his obligation to Mortimer's cause, saying "on his part I'll empty all these veins...But I will lift the down-trod Mortimer | As high in the air as this unthankful king" (*IHIV* [1.3.132-135]). Rather than concentrate upon Henry's usurpation of the throne, Hotspur focuses on King Henry's misuse and betrayal of those who had helped him do so in *Richard II*. In *Richard II*, upon meeting Hotspur for the first time, Bolingbroke says "I count myself in nothing else so happy | As in a soul remembering my good friends" ([2.3.46-7]). Yet, he denies them in the next play. As a result, Hotspur, like Laertes, becomes indignant against the king, without consideration. About his captives he swears

An if the devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them:-- I will after straight
And tell him so: for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make hazard of my head.

IHIV [1.3.125-8].

The resemblance between his words and Laertes', above, draws a connection between both the vehemence and danger of the men's passion in the face of their respective king. Where Laertes says that his actions are denying his vows of allegiance to Claudius, Hotspur states clearly that his actions endanger his life against Henry IV. The denial of oaths and the danger of death are

prejudged opinions of him. Hal's being a bad son is actually his proactively being a good son, basing it not on others' current opinions but on their future opinions, once the goal of kingship is reached. In this way, Hal does to the court what Worcester has done to Hotspur: he leads them into a place where he can control the circumstances, using to his advantage their assumption that his true intent is shown by his antic disposition. Derick Marsh says "His wild youth and his planned reformation are political means to a political end" (21-22). By performing irresponsibly while absenting himself from the eyes of the court, Hal is able to subversively prepare to defeat Hotspur, the first step in his inevitable assumption of the throne.

Prince Hal steadily tells the king that the intent behind his offence is to beguile Hotspur into underestimating him. To his father he says "I will redeem all this on Percy's head...for the time will come, | That I shall make this northern youth exchange | His glorious deeds for my indignities" (*IHIV* [3.2.132-146]). Hal predicts that he will end his wantonness when he and Hotspur trade fames. Whether this is Hal's plan from the start or if he is now improvising wisdom before his father, Hal focuses his scheme of feigning "loose behaviour" (*IHIV* [1.2.198]) toward manipulating the young Percy, having recognized him as a danger to Henry IV and to himself. Hotspur unknowingly foreshadows how his death will happen when he speaks of his intention to fight the Prince: "Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse" (*IHIV* [4.1.121]). These predictions are fulfilled mimetically, by containing the characters within their words, when, in the Battle of Shrewsbury, Hal becomes Hotspur by finishing his final line, begun by Percy, speaking to himself in third-person:

Hotspur.
 --no, Percy, thou art dust,
 And food for-- [*dies*]
 Prince Henry.
 For worms, brave Percy: fare thee well, great heart!
IHIV [5.4.84-86].

[5.2.208-10]). By defeating the champion directly, Hal asserts his qualification to rule which his father compromised in his subversive ascent. This dynamic of directness being healthier for a kingdom's ruler than subversion appears in *Hamlet*, with Fortinbras' symbolizing Denmark's return to imperial health. In recompense for Prince Hal's apparent shrewdness in aiming for Hotspur as he does, King Henry gives his affirmation and consent, saying "Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein" (*IHIV* [3.2.161]). Hal presents such a defense of his offences, painting them as actually responsible, that rather than rebuke his son, as he had intended in the scene, the king gives Hal permission to continue with his plan, placing his "trust" in the Prince's deceitful tactics. Hal's treatment of Hotspur, who stands as the first real obstacle to his royal ascent, reveals his cunning ability to defy his wild reputation and assert himself at the correct moment.

[*Henry IV Part 1 to Part 2: "Redeeming time"*]

In *Henry IV Part 1*, Hal uses his wildness to maintain a safe distance, be it spacial or figurative and political, between himself and his role models. Hal's not following his father's example of strategically hiding his ambition establishes his own integrity, which is not reliant upon Henry IV's blot of usurpation. Through his apparent disinterestedness in the politics of the throne, he avoids Hotspur's dangerous suspicion while using, with Worcester, the young Percy's temperament against him. Finally, he proves his ability to succeed in spite of Falstaff's bad example and reputation, doubling its use from mere escapism to being also a veil to hide his ambitions. Prince Hal's success in defeating Hotspur at the play's end results from his unconventional use of wildness as a defense against the English court. His ultimate goal of healing England from his father's deposition, which is one shared by Hamlet in relation to

to surprise the realm and “be more wonder’d at” (*1HIV* [1.2.205]).

[*Henry IV Part 2: Rumour*]

Shakespeare opens *Part 2* with Rumour, who, being the personification of a concept, dissolves the literally historical link between the two plays, thereby mimicking the English insecure state. Rather than have a character link the two plays with a true account of Shrewsbury’s outcome, the play begins with a prologue who is as untrustworthy as a rumor, being one himself. Rumour says “My office is | To noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell | Under the wrath of noble Hotspur’s sword” (*Henry IV Part 2* [Induction 28-30]). Rather than continue chronologically from the final events of *Henry IV Part 1*, *Part 2* inverts the events, thereby removing any assumptions of back story the audience may have based on its prequel. Rumour uses the verb “noise,” simultaneously refraining from self-personification, as any active verb synonym to “speak” would, and ironically recalling Bolingbroke’s words in *Richard II*, “Let’s march without the noise of threatening drum” ([3.3.51]). The contrast between the word’s two contexts highlights how far the state of England has come from the early stages of Henry IV’s usurpation of the throne. Rumour continues with “From Rumour’s tongues | They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs” (*2HIV* [Induction 39-40]). He establishes a link of uncertainty between *Part 1* and *Part 2*, achieved by juxtaposing the antitheses of “comforts false” and “true wrongs.” The characters will not know which accounts of Shrewsbury are true. This lack of a clear background means there is no historically factual theme or event upon which the play can build, and that the audience knows no more facts than do the characters themselves.

The two main events of the play are passing of the crown from Henry IV to Henry V, and Henry V’s rejection of Falstaff at the play’s end. Yet, unlike Hal’s preparation for the defeat of

questioning which Harry is being spoken of, a theme continued from *Part 1*, which involves Prince Hal and Harry Percy. Questioning the young men's names propagates the confusion in *Part 2*'s beginning, along with the dichotomy between Rumour's lies and the truth told by Travers, who says "He told me that rebellion had ill luck, | And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold" (2*HIV* [1.1.42]). At this early moment, the audience is at least three times removed from seeing the result of Shrewsbury, being told by one who was, himself, told; rather than being based on events seen onstage by the audience, *Part 2* begins with hearsay. Near the end of the play, Hal ends a similar confusion of names by directly addressing it. Evoking the interchangeability of his and his father's names, Hal says "This is the English, not the Turkish court; | Not Amurath and Amurath succeeds, | But Harry Harry" (2*HIV* [5.2.47-9]). He refers to the Turkish sultan who, upon ascending the throne, killed all his brothers to protect his state (Humphreys 164). Echoing Hotspur's words from *Part 1* ([4.1.121]), Hal highlights his sharing his father's name to indicate both the difference and sameness between himself and his father. Evoking his father's name, especially poignant just after the man's death, Hal forecasts that he will rule as his father would have if he had been free from the burden of political illegitimacy, which came from his crime of usurpation. Once crowned, Hal also establishes through the use of their names (as metonyms for their characters) the foundation of rightful succession which has been lacking through both plays, especially in *Part 2* during Henry IV's illness and the skepticism over Hal's being worthy of his inheritance. In *Hamlet*, Hamlet does not resemble his father, though he shares his name with the king, the prince does not resemble him, and so, is inhibited in succeeding him. However, in *Part 2*, Hal's difference from his father allows him to establish a stronger legitimacy. Whereas Hamlet falls short of his father's example, Hal surpasses his own.

eventually kills him. Once Hal gains the throne, he has no room or need for wildness, for his rule will be established and he will not need to feign his character one way or another. As happens throughout *Henry V*, whether in state matters or in mocking, King Hal is able to jest with virtual impunity because of both his authority and his wisdom.

The contrast in Hal's demeanor between the two plays stresses that the England of *Part 1* has changed in transitioning to *Part 2*. Falstaff speaks of Hal's change when he says "the young prince hath misled me" (*2HIV* [1.2.145]). Though the general opinion had believed Falstaff to be the source of Hal's apparent wantonness,⁶ Falstaff attests that, instead, the opposite is true. Yet, according to the knight, Hal is better because of him: "Hereof comes it, that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath...till'd, with excellent endeavor of drinking...that he is become very hot and valiant" (*2HIV* [4.3.120-6]). Although self-vindication is consistent with Falstaff's character, he is not completely incorrect about Hal's benefiting from their shared offences. However, rather than expose him as self-contradicting and humorous, as Falstaff's folly does to himself, Hal's manipulation reveals him as being controlled amidst his apparently uncontrolled behavior. Later, in his third scene-ending soliloquy, Falstaff says "this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me, nor a man cannot make him laugh" (*2HIV* [4.3.86-8]). Despite his constant exaggeration, Falstaff's opinion of Hal has changed with the revelations the prince has shown of himself since the two characters' introduction together in *Part 1*. Whereas *Part 1* focuses on Hal's misleading Hotspur in order to defeat him, *Part 2* shows the effect his deception has had on the characters surrounding Hal who do not suspect his ambition. Having passed the usefulness and joy of jesting, having left Falstaff, Hal now moves to

⁶ Such as when his father says he spends his time with "unrestrained loose companions" (*Richard II* [5.3.5-6]); when he then says he sees "riot and disonour stain the brow | Of my young Harry" (*1HIV* [1.1.84]); then attesting that England "is the fattest soil to weeds; | And he, the noble image of my youth, | Is overspread with them" (*2HIV* [4.4.55]).

second scene of *Part 2* of the Lord Chief Justice, whom the audience may be set against, based on Hal's ill-treatment of him in *Part 1* ([2.4]), ironically serves to build tension for Hal's endorsement of the Justice when he assumes the throne. The Justice affirms Warwick's warning: "Indeed I think the young king loves you not...you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair; | Which swims against your stream of quality" (2*HIV* [5.2.9]). However, once crowned, Hal bids the Justice "still bear the balance and the sword" (2*HIV* [5.2.103]). Shifting from his demeanor in *Part 1*, King Hal supports the Justice because of the adherence to the law for which he berated the man in *Part 1*, and he shows the progression through which he has come since the previous play. This acceptance of Falstaff's rival subtly foreshadows Hal's denial of Falstaff, who had been, in his wild hours, his closest mentor. Falstaff no longer stands alone with Hal; instead, he stands at the prince's mercy on the level of other minor characters.

At the play's end, Hal's rejection of Falstaff exemplifies the prince's separation from his demeanor in *Part 1*, and it asserts Falstaff's having no special place in Hal's life as king. In his denial of the man, which dispels the remaining fears in the court of his inability to be king, Hal shows that Falstaff cannot hold any higher place in his life than any other commoner. Expecting to be treated as Henry's favorite, Falstaff says to Shallow "I will leer upon him as a comes by, and do but mark the countenance that he will give me" (2*HIV* [5.5.6-8]). Falstaff believes that as king Hal will behave the same way he did when a prince in the tavern. Yet, Hal responds with "I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers. | How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!" (2*HIV* [5.5.48-9]). Contrary to his previous affection for the man, Hal's words resemble Christ's words in the Parable of the Ten Virgins: "But [the bridegroom] replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you'" (Matt 25.12). This shows Hal's resolution against Falstaff by alluding to the irrevocability of a person's allegiance when the bridegroom comes. This similarity seems to

would have in such a planned rejection. Hal consistently distances himself from Falstaff's ways (whether explicitly or subtly), rather than lead the knight to believe he is in accordance with all the knight does, a dynamic meant by Humphreys; in spite of their mutual carousing, Hal is never as honest before Falstaff as he is before the audience or his father. Throughout *Part 1*, Harry consistently connects Falstaff to Satan, as shown above, and during their court-play as "That most villainous, abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff; that old white-bearded Satan" (*1HIV* [2.4.421-2]). Hal subtly shows an opinion of the knight which is more consistent with his demeanor as king than as irresponsible prince. In both plays, Harry assigns Falstaff a charge of inexperienced and exasperating soldiers, which, whether it is to mock the man or keep up public appearances, frustrates the knight (*1HIV* [3.3.202-4], *2HIV* [1.2.12-13, 3.2]). Even as early as his first soliloquy Hal reveals his wisdom about the way being prince clashes with Falstaff, whom, nonetheless, he uses for political advantage. Ironically, the character most deceived by Hal's ruse of wildness is Falstaff because he is the last to learn, with the commoners, of Hal's separation from his old ways. By finally stating publicly the foreknowledge of his separation, which he has hidden for so long (*2HIV* [5.5.56-59]), Harry completes his transformation in the public's eye from the "unthrifty son" of *Richard II* to the "fair proceeding" (*2HIV* [5.5.98]) King Henry V. In this denial of those who are not good for him in order to appear and be a better king, Hal assures the court against his father's suspicion that, in his lack of foresight, "As thou art to this hour, was Richard then" (*1HIV* [3.2.94]). Prince Hal is not and will not be subject to Richard's illusion of security which allowed Bolingbroke to usurp him. Hal will not fill his court with undeserving men, as did Richard II. As Elsa Sjöberg argues, "Vain aspirations were Richard's by nature; royalty, his cloak. Royalty is Hal's by nature; frivolous pleasure, his cloak" (13). Hal's directing himself foremost to the crown displays the truth that his secure and peaceful kingship supersedes

resurrecting, in himself, another character on their death. As with Hotspur and Hal in *Part 1*, the transition of the kinship from Henry IV to Hal is foreshadowed by their sharing surnames.

Whereas in *Part 1* Hal assumes Hotspur's state by finishing his final sentence, Henry IV dies offstage. Yet, Hal assumes his role by saying to the court "I'll be your father and your brother too... Yet weep that Harry's dead... But Harry lives" (*2HIV* [5.2.57-60]). Resembling the words of Christ in John 14.10-11,⁷ Hal takes up his father's responsibilities as if he were becoming his father, rather than merely succeeding him by wearing his crown. Representing in himself the subversion he uses to usurp Richard II in *Richard II*, Henry IV must die before the curse set on England by his actions can be alleviated. With Henry IV dies the political unrest; Hal's rule will be as his father wanted his own to be, were it not fraught with the distrust and fear he experienced. In passing to Hal, the crown is restored to a stable, if not rightful, heir (though the ramifications of Bolingbroke's usurpation for the crown for his house continue until the end of *Richard III*). Even Henry IV, before his death, affirms to Hal that "thou stand'st more sure than I could do" (*2HIV* [4.4.333]). *Henry IV Part 2* ends with Hal's coronation, in which his progression to the throne, coming to fruition, temporarily redeems England from the uncertainty begun by Bolingbroke's usurping the throne.

In Hal's life, his dedication to ruling with his peoples' backing rationalizes his defying his father's example, which will not teach him how to ascend a throne effectively. By being willing to break the rules set on him for the sake of England's health, Hal avoids the political dangers which afflict all other kings in the history cycle.

[Conclusion]

⁷ ["Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe in

behaving as his father expects and prefers him to behave. Rather than assume the kingship first and then try to align the courts will with him, as Henry IV does with his planned crusade, Hal must break the cycle by gaining the court and country's support before and upon his coronation. That Hal succeeds in overcoming his father's rule is shown in *Henry V*, when the Archbishop of Canterbury says

The breath no sooner left his father's body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seem'd to die too; yea, at that very moment,
Consideration, like an angel, came,
And whipt th'offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise...
Never was such as sudden scholar made;
Never came reformation in a flood,
With such a heady current, scouring faults...

[1.1.25-34].

This surprise in his scrutinizers, which appears elsewhere in *Henry V*, confirms Hal's success in using his wildness to as a thing to defy at the right time, and, in denying his wildness, Hal garners sudden support from his court, something his father never possesses.

Both fathers' expectations require the removal of a king from their country's throne. In *Hamlet*, this requires Hamlet, as said above, to go against his uncle who possesses kingly authority; because Hamlet cannot be protected by the law he assails Claudius indirectly. However, in the *Henry IV* plays, Hal must replace his father in order for his father's expectations to be fulfilled. Henry IV is aware of this, saying "all the soil of the achievement goes | With me into the earth" (2*HIV* [4.4.320-1]). This awareness is what causes Henry IV to, amidst his illness which physicalizes his internal suffering, shift between loving and distrusting Hal. The king has, by the end of his life in *Part 2*, become so fearful for his safety as king that he treats Hal as an enemy in his final scene. As he still critical of Hal at his life's end, though the prince tells him many times through the plays that he is following his father's will for him, Henry IV's distrust of

of vengeance is more personal and more dire, his father and sister being dishonored and killed (where Hotspur's father is only dishonored, and he has no sister to speak of). The difference in their character is that, had Hotspur lost a sister as does Laertes, his past hotness suggests that he would not become cold, but would only ascend into more rage. Hotspur's treating his wife as martially as he does everything else, saying to her "when I am a-horseback, I will swear | I love thee infinitely" (*IHV* [2.3.97-98]), suggests that he might react to a sister's death the same way he reacts to everything else. This difference between his and Laertes' reactions is also presumable from the calm way Laertes behaves with Ophelia in *Hamlet*'s first act, before he leaves for France. Laertes deepens the character model by diverging from the politically vehement Hotspur and moving toward a more family oriented character. Conversely, Hotspur's defiance of King Henry IV himself, portrays a confidence which is not as visible in Laertes, who uses indirect means to take revenge on Hamlet.

Hal's death in *Henry VI Part I* is the first scene Shakespeare writes of the histories. Yet, he never alludes to it when writing Hal's life as a prince and as king; instead, Shakespeare writes the final scene of *Henry V* as if Hal will live forever. Alternatively, Hamlet is, on some level, aware that by accomplishing his father's task he will die. Yet, what Hal's ascension is to the *Henry IV* plays Hamlet's removal of Claudius is to his own play. Hamlet cannot complete the Ghost's will without preparing in a way which avoids dangers in the same way Hal does, diverting people's suspicions of him by performing in a way abnormal to the other members of court. That one prince dies and one prince seems to never die shows what the opposing play to each might be like, were circumstances different. Had Hal been killed by Hotspur, his name as a truant son of a usurper would be irreparably wounded in the way Hamlet fears his own is at his death. Had Laertes not poisoned his sword, but remained direct as Hotspur, Hamlet may have

colloquially with Hal as if he were not speaking as a prince. In *Richard II*, the gardener is exalted when he speaks of himself:

I will go root away
The noisome weeds, that without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

[3.4.37-9].

Ironically, with their particular language they describe the condition of the realm in the same way as Henry Bolingbroke, cited above, speaking of himself as if he were the one weeding a realm. This parallel exalts the gardener for, within his “realm” of the garden, he is as powerful as Bolingbroke, doing in his garden what Henry seeks to do in Richard II’s court. In being to his garden what Henry is to England, the gardener is placed above King Richard. His servant implies this dichotomy between the king and the gardener when he asks “Why should we...Keep law and form and due proportion...When our sea-walled garden, the whole land, | Is full of weeds...?” ([3.4.40-44]). According to his own servant, the gardener shows greater wisdom in his garden than King Richard does in his kingdom. The equalization of the royalty and the commoners is further established in the scene when, in response to the queen’s calling him “old Adam’s likeness...thou little better thing than earth” ([3.4.73-8]), the gardener says humbly “Pardon me, madam: little joy have I | To breathe this news: yet what I say is true” ([3.4.81-2]). That a commoner may stand with such firmness, though with humility, against the queen of the realm levels the relationship between the two. The queen, by learning of her husband’s deposition from a gardener, is reliant on him for truth about her realm, and therefore is he equal to her. Her only defense is anger as she says “Pray God the plants thou graft’st may never grow” ([3.4.100-1]). Yet, though her reprisal against him is against his ability as a gardener, he, still humble, says once she leaves “so that thy state might be no worse, | I would my skill were subject to thy curse” ([3.4.102-3]). Associated with Bolingbroke, who has not been stopped by

possible with the history play genre: a plot may reach across three plays, all the while ascending to an intended point, which here is Hal's success as a king. Although each play is independent and has its own rise and release of tension in Hal's growth, they all build upon each other as parts of one character's growth.

Notably, the relation between royalty and commoners in *Richard II*'s garden scene, where the common gardener is shown in his element to possess as much authority as the queen, is reiterated in *Hamlet* with the interaction between Hamlet and the grave digger in [5.1]. The connection to *Richard II*'s garden scene is in the words of the first gravedigger: "There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession" (*Hamlet* [5.1.30-33]). As the gardener does, the gravedigger asserts his authority to work in soil. Yet, whereas the gardener's authority is linked to Bolingbroke's authority, the gravedigger hearkens to Adam, who, after the Fall, must work the earth from which he was created (Gen 3.17-19). His words ironically reversing the use in *Richard II* of Adam as an insult, the grave digger puns of Adam: "could he dig without arms?" ([5.1.39]). By calling such workers-in-earth "gentlemen" --who, by definition, own land and bear a coat of arms-- he equates himself the nobility. From his royal perspective, Hamlet asks "Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?" ([5.1.69-70]). In his question, Hamlet mocks the gravedigger, who is apparently so simple that he has no "feeling of his business": he sings in spite of either his low occupation or the moroseness of it. Yet, by speaking in a question, Hamlet may be speaking ironically, as if he knows there is more to the man than is visible through his apparent simplicity. Whichever the case, the man sings because, in a manner of speaking, he is a landowning gentleman in his occupation. The job reminds the gravedigger daily that, as did the "ancient gentleman" Adam, he owns the land, including that inhabited by the Danish royalty after death.

than another garden scene, this final frame appropriately mimics the difference between the histories and *Hamlet*, a tragedy play. Whereas the focus of the garden metaphor in the histories is the cultivation and growth of England, in *Hamlet* the metaphor progresses, with everything else in the plot, toward the protagonist's death in the story's end. This exemplifies how *Hamlet* modifies the language of the history plays to reach a different tone and ending. Because Hamlet's play is a tragedy, rather than a continuous history like Hal's, his growth results in his death. Whereas at the end of *Henry V* Hal's identity relates back to the successful gardener, Hamlet's death reminds the audience of the gravedigger scene. This immortalizes Hamlet in a different way than the histories do to Hal. Hamlet never has the chance to fail as a ruler; instead he only has Fortinbras' and Horatio's good words. This contrasts with Hal's ascension, where the possibility of failure and having a bad name is ever-present. As shown above, Hal uses this to his advantage. Hamlet, however, spends much of his time trying to kill Claudius without soiling his name. A drawback of Hamlet's death at the end of his play is that his character does not have the ability to develop across three plays, as Hal's does. Hal's character has room to be rounded as the audience sees him adapt his behavior to the decreasing proximity of his kingship, and the audience has more time to become invested in his success. Conversely, Hamlet's death may invoke a similar amount of catharsis, in that just as the audience wants Hal to succeed, they do not want Hamlet to die.

Works Cited

Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Ed. Hazard

Adams. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. 761-764.

Humphreys, A.R. "Editorial Notes." *King Henry IV Part 2*. By William Shakespeare. London:

---. "King John." *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1996. 302-328.

---. "Richard II." *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1996. 359-387.

---. "Richard III." *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1996. 98-138.

Sjoberg, Elsa. "From Madcap Prince to King." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20 (1969): 11-16.

Wofford, Susanne L. "Introduction: Biographical and Historical Contexts." *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. Boston: Bedford, 1994. 3-26.

* The rest of the paper's title can be found among the words of Falstaff in *Henry IV Part 2* [2.4.295].